

# Interview Tips

The Key  
to a Successful Interview

# Research the Company

- Research the company thoroughly
- Where do you fit in (skill set)?
- Tailor your skills to company's needs (review job description)
- Information you uncover reflects your interest and enthusiasm in position
- Establishes a common base of knowledge for questions

# What Do You Need To Know?

- Age of company
- Services or products
- Growth pattern
- Reputation
- Divisions and subsidiaries
- Competitors within the industry
- Locations/length of time there
- Size
- Number of employees
- Sales/assets/earnings
- New products or projects
- Culture and values

# Develop Career Goals

- Have a focus--at least act like it, even if you don't have a clue
- Identify challenges you are looking for
- Know what you want to accomplish
- Have a plan or agenda

## Write Down Answers/Scenarios

- Draft written answers to potential interview questions
- Develop job appropriate scenarios based on your research
  - A marketing plan for a new product
  - A solution to one of their problems

# What Are Your Strengths

- Relate them to the job
- Give examples of where you have demonstrated these
- How were they developed
- Identify your mentors and/or role models

# What are your Weaknesses?

- Relate these to your work
- Show the positive side of these
- Identify the steps you have taken for improvement
- Detail the results and/or time frames expected
- Identify criticism you have received and its effects

# Write Out Questions for the Interviewer

- Consider multiple areas
  - Corporate values
  - Anticipated responsibilities
  - Employment trends
  - Measures of work performance
  - Work environment
  - Quality of work
  - Personality factors
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the industry and company



## Appearance Matters. . .A Lot!

- If you don't dress seriously, they can't take you seriously!!
- Make a good first impression
- Pride in yourself implies pride in your work
- Show your creativity in your work, not your appearance
- Dress conservatively
- Be well groomed and clean

## Don't Forget the Details

- Nicely styled hair
- Natural, clean looking face/makeup
- Clean your fingernails
- Skip the clunky jewelry
- Press your clothes
- Avoid strong perfumes or colognes
- Avoid cigarettes

# Professional Image for Women

- Best choices
  - Navy or black suit, solid blouse
  - Suit in solid colors, printed blouse
  - Straight dress with jacket, solid colors
- Wear polished, low heeled shoes
- Minimal accessories
- Hosiery - appropriate color, no holes, no darker than your hem
- Don't wear anything too tight or revealing

# Professional Image for Men

- Best choices
  - Business suit, dark colors (blues, grays, browns), white shirt
  - Suit with solid shirt
  - 2-piece suit, lighter colors, striped shirt
- Button your jacket when you stand
- Shine your shoes
- Socks-appropriate color, no holes, long length

# Attitude

- Be on time for the interview
- Treat the receptionist with respect
- Be enthusiastic, eager, and smile
- Don't sit until you're invited to, and sit up straight
- Practice good eye contact
- Walk with confidence
- Adapt to your surroundings
- Use Mr. or Ms. unless asked to use first name

## Practice Your “Soft Skills”

- Greet people with a firm handshake
- Stand up to meet people
- Keep your guard up during lunch or dinner
- Practice your dining etiquette
- Remember “please” and “thank you”
- Be good at chatting and small talk

# What to Bring to an Interview

- Several copies of your resume
- Your portfolio, if applicable
- New notebook and a nice pen
- Briefcase or leather folder
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of references

# The Interviewer's Agenda

- They have an agenda
  - To determine if you have the skills
  - Identify your personal attributes
  - Assess your motivation
- Help them by
  - Showing how you fit their company
  - Exhibit your personality
  - Share your career goals



# Tell Me About Yourself

*Create a 60-second sound byte*

Include

- Geographic origins
- Reason for choosing major
- Educational background
- 2 or 3 strengths related to position
- Specific expertise and accomplishments
- How you can contribute to company
- Identify your career goals
- Speak clearly and honestly

# Behavior Based Interviewing

- Previous behavior predicts future behavior
- Examples show the meaning you have made of education and experience
- Provides insight on how the candidate's mind works

# Answer Questions with a STAR Approach



- Situation
- Task
- Action
- Results

*STAR provides an outline for answers*

# Illegal Topics

- Topics to avoid include
  - Nationality/race
  - Marital status
  - Religion
  - Affiliations
  - Disability or medical history
  - Pregnancy, birth control, child care
  - Age

# Telephone Interviews

- Dress up and use a professional environment to maintain your professionalism
- Have your notes organized, highlighted, and within easy access
- Without non-verbal communication, be aware that it is difficult to “read” the interviewer
- Make sure your voice conveys enthusiasm
- If more than one person on the other end, have them identify themselves when asking their questions

## Details Needed for Follow-up

- Ask for their business card
- Use interviewer's name
- Send a short thank you note within 24 hours
- Remind them of key points from the interview
- Emphasize your interest

## Follow-up the Interview

- Send a short thank you note within 24 hours
- Remind them of key points from the interview
- Emphasize your interest
- State when you expect the next contact to be

## Evaluate/Retrain

- How did you do overall?
- What were your strengths?
- What needs improvement?
- Develop a follow-up chart for tracking